# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# RURAL DEVELOPMENT
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5880
ANSWERED ON:08.09.2011
DESERT AREA
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**Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the area of desert in the country has increased during the last three years;

(b) if so, the extent of such increase in desert dominant States; and

(c) the scheme undertaken by the Government to reduce the desertification in the country?

## Answer

MINISTER OF STATE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SISIR KUMAR ADHIKARI)

(a) A High level Technical Committee set up in 1994 under the Chairmanship of Prof. Hanumantha Rao identified 45.7949 m. ha desert areas in 235 blocks of 40 districts in 7 States, namely Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka and Rajasthan. As per the information furnished by States, the desert area has not increased in any of these States during the last three years.

(b) In view of (a) above, question does not arise.

(c) The Department of Land Resources has been implementing Desert Development Programme in identified areas of seven States namely, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka and Rajasthan. The basic objective of the programme is to control desertification and mitigate the adverse effects of extreme climatic conditions of desertification through rejuvenation of the natural resource base of identified desert areas. The programme strives to achieve ecological balance in the long run.

The Desert Development Programme along with other Area Development Programmes of Department of Land Resources viz. Drought Prone Areas Programme, and Integrated Wastelands Development Programme has been consolidated into a single modified programme called Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) with effect from 26.02.2009 to be implemented as per the Common Guidelines for Watershed Development Projects, 2008. This consolidation is for optimum use of resources, sustainable outcomes and integrated planning.

Under IWMP, an area of 22.65 million hectares is proposed to be sanctioned during 11th Five Year Plan period. Against this target, an area of 18.44 million hectares has been taken up and an amount of Rs. 2670.94 crore has been released to States (as on 31.08.2011). The drought prone areas and desert affected areas are inter-alia given priority while selecting the project areas for development under IWMP.